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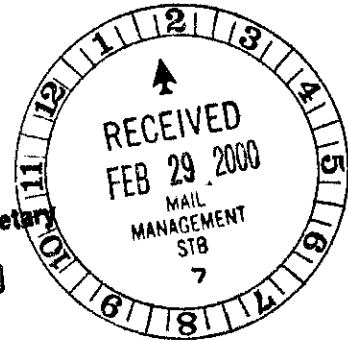
LEADERS IN INNOVATIVE TRANSPORTATION CONCEPTS

Established 1977

February 22, 2000

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
Attn: STB Ex Parte No. 582
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Dear Sir:

Quaboag Transfer Inc. is a transload/distribution company based in Bondsville, MA. We have been providing transload services to the Forest Products Community for the past twenty-three years. As a major user of rail services our company generates nearly 4,000 rail cars of lumber and panel products annually from producers based in the U.S. and Canada. Due to the nature of our business Quaboag has maintained a long term positive working relationship with the CN-IC and the BNSF. The purpose of this letter is to comment on the issues to be discussed on March 8, 2000 in Ex Parte 582.

Quaboag encourages the Surface Transportation Board to focus on whether the proposed CN-BNSF combination is good for Shippers, not on potential downstream effects. The CN-BNSF combination should be judged solely on the merit of demonstrable benefits and costs for shippers in terms of service and competition that this transaction will bring.

The timing of the proposed CN-BNSF combination is not the central issue for our company - our concern is service. Recent mergers have failed on service, not because of timing. Accordingly, the Surface Transportation Board should focus on ensuring that the CN-BNSF combination, and any other future mergers, will deliver service.

The Surface Transportation Board has a comprehensive process to evaluate railroad transactions and protect the public interest. It should fairly evaluate the CN-BNSF combination according to that process. Do not let other railroads use the Surface Transportation Board process to protect themselves and not Shippers.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas N. Stokes
Vice President

PALMER INDUSTRIAL PARK • P.O. BOX 1139 • BONDSVILLE, MA 01009-1139
Tel. (413) 283-9946 • Fax (413) 289-1608 • Website www.quaboagtransfer.com